

**Optional Extended Year Program Summary
2000-2001**

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Foreword

The Optional Extended Year Program is a supplemental state grant program first introduced as a Retention Reduction Pilot Program from 1993-1995 for students in first grade. The success of the Retention Reduction Program led to greater support for such initiatives in the Texas legislature. The Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP) was initiated in 1995 as a result of Senate Bill 1 in order to provide extended learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade 8 who are at risk of academic failure.

The primary focus of an OEY program is to immediately reduce and ultimately eliminate the need for student retention. OEY programs are designed to accommodate four school-day options; 1) extended day; 2) extended week; 3) intersession for year-round schools; and 4) summer school. A school district may provide instructional services during any of these programs for a period of time not to exceed 30 days. In 2000-01, 8 elementary schools conducted an OEY program during intersession. These 8 year-round schools served 708 students in grades K-6. In the summer of 2001, 28 schools conducted OEY funded programs and served 2,810 students.

Since 1993, the Austin Independent School District has used the OEY program for extended day, extended week, year-round schools' March intersession, and summer school to reduce the number of AISD students that were at risk of being retained in schools receiving Title I funds.

School year 2000-2001 marked the first time AISD served students at risk of failing a grade level or a course from any school within the AISD attendance area (districtwide service) during the summer program. That school year is also the first time students in grades 3-5 were involved in a summer school effort outside of their home school. This effort was successful in serving students from 82 schools throughout the district.

Because the Texas Education Agency sets the criteria for promotion, and provides OEY program policy on class size (no more than 16 students to a class and no fewer than 8), attendance, staff development and parental involvement, this report will provide operational and outcome (attendance, promotion, parent involvement, and staff development) data and recommendations to assist district program planners, administrators (principals), grants staff, and School Support Services staff (parent involvement) in the planning and delivery of services to students at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. New state law requires that in the 2002-2003 school year students who fail the new state mandated Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in Reading at the third grade level will generally not be promoted. Thus, at-risk students whose assessed skills have been determined to be below grade level according to district standards, and/or students who need to recover a grade or grades for promotion purposes will be the primary focus in AISD's OEY programs.

Evaluation Overview

Around mid-September, TEA requires each district that receives OEY funds to submit OEY information as part of the district's electronic PEIMS report. The OEY PEIMS data contain basic demographic information about the students who participated in the previous school-year OEY program activities (e.g., student's name, PEIMS ID number, campus enrollment number, the next school year grade, OEY program type, total days of instruction, total days absent, and total number of program days). Approximately 10 days after the electronic data submission, districts are required to submit an OEY Program Evaluation and Final Expenditure report package. The report package contains the following information about students and parents who participated in 2000-2001 OEY programs:

- €# numbers of students retained or promoted,
- €# average OEY class size,
- €# student attendance rates,
- €# number of students promoted or failed in grades 6-8 who took 1-3 courses in the summer that they failed during the regular school year,
- €# number of teaching and district staff participating in OEY activities, provision of staff development, and
- €# the number of parents directly involved in OEY activities.

In previous years, only students from AISD Title I campuses were served with OEY funds at their home campus. However, in 2000-2001: 1) all students at risk of failing a grade level or a course from schools throughout AISD's attendance area were served in grades 3-8; 2) students at risk of failing a grade level in grades 3-5 districtwide were specifically included in the academic summer activities; and 3) students were served at designated cluster sites instead of at the home school sites. Staff from AISD's Office of Program Evaluation gathered data from principals at summer school cluster sites, the program coordinator of the Student Understanding Can Culminate in Excellence in Summer School (SUCCESS), the OEY grant manager, year-round principals, other summer school staff (e.g., campus parent support specialists), the Family Resource Center's parent support specialist, and the PEIMS coordinator. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to gather data to complete the summer PEIMS report and the Texas Education Agency program evaluation package, and to provide promotional and operational data to AISD administrators, planners, and support services staff in order to enhance the operations of the OEY program in AISD.

Because the implementation of *designated* summer school cluster sites in 2001 was a first for AISD, operational methods were reviewed to enhance future implementation of the OEY summer program. Selected at-risk students from feeder schools are assigned to a *receiving* school/cluster site central to the feeders' location. At the elementary school level, AISD's summer program used 12 cluster sites that provided literacy and mathematics classes through the SUCCESS curriculum for at-risk students in grades 3-5. At the middle school level, grade recovery for promotion was provided at 5 cluster middle schools for students who were at risk of being retained in grades 6-7 for the 2001-2002 school year. At-risk students in grade 8 were served through the Bridges to 9th Grade summer program at the high school they would attend if promoted.

Administrators at each OEY-funded cluster site were asked to provide various types of information about their program and staff. Four key areas were: 1) type and content of staff development held for teachers prior to the program; 2) number of teachers and other staff hired with OEY funds for the program; 3) number of parent involvement activities held; and 4) number of parents who attended these activities. These data must be reported to TEA.

Teachers were also asked to provide information about their students on a roster provided by staff from the Office of Program Evaluation. Data requested were: 1) student demographics (name, student ID number, current grade); 2) daily attendance; 3) academic classes attended; 4) pre- and posttest data for program participants; and 5) student promotion or retention recommendation.

Most of this data is reported to TEA. However, TEA does not require the reporting of pre- and posttest data in the Optional Extended Year Evaluation Program report or the PEIMS report. In addition, student promotion or retention is not necessarily predicated upon pre- and posttest data or attendance.

Evaluation Objectives

1. To document AISD's OEY program activities and expenditures.
2. To evaluate the participation and quality of parent involvement in AISD's OEY activities.
3. To summarize data that were included as part of a TEA report on the district's OEY activities, per state law, and
4. To recommend methods to enhance the operations of the AISD Optional Extended Year summer school program so that student academic success can be promoted.

Expenditures

AISD received OEY program funds in January 2001. The Final Expenditure report submitted by AISD as part of TEA OEY Evaluation Report for 2000-2001 showed a total project cost of \$1,314,398. Payroll costs took the largest share of the project budget at \$1,124,607 (86%), which included gross salaries, wages and benefits for site principals, teachers, teacher aides, counselors, clerks, parent support specialists, an evaluation associate, and other school staff. Consumable teaching and office supplies, textbooks, testing materials, and janitorial supplies cost \$145,629 (11%). Other operating costs such as refreshments, transportation, awards and incentives cost \$35,783 (2%). Contracted services (such as child care for parental involvement activities or nursing services) cost \$8,379 (1%).

Staffing and Staff Development

In 2000-01, AISD used OEY funds to hire 460 staff members, and of these, 324 were teachers and 136 were other staff (e.g., principals, teacher aides, counselors, clerks, parent support specialists, evaluation associate, special education and bilingual support staff). See Table 1 for the instructional staff information by grade level and term.

Table 1: OEY 2000-2001 Instructional Staff by Term and Grade

Grade Level	March Intersession # of Teachers	Summer School # of Teachers
K	3	0
1	8	0
2	15	0
3	17	61
4	16	55
5	12	33
6	6	21
7	0	31
8	0	46
Total	77	247

Source: AISD OEY Staff Survey

All 36 campuses that conducted OEY programs provided one or more staff professional development sessions during 2000-2001. The categories of staff development included curriculum and instruction, assessment/testing, student skills and needs, procedures and policy, and planning. The content of both intersession and summer school staff development usually included training in the use of the balanced literacy instructional approach for SUCCESS teachers; relevant curriculum materials (math, reading, social studies, and special education modifications) for secondary teachers; and TEKS and/or curricula alignment for all teachers. Training in assessment/testing covered techniques, the DRA, alternative assessment, and portfolio expectations. Staff development was also provided on behavioral management, attendance, program schedules, pay, staff assignments, student registration, and staff planning and preparation.

Parent Involvement

All 36 campuses provided one or more parent involvement activities during 2000-2001. Letters/flyer to parents, forms sent home to parents, and phone calls to parents were the most common methods of notifying parents about the program and their child/children's eligibility for participation.

AISD schools with OEY programs (intersession and summer) held a variety of activities to engage parents in their child's learning. The parents were notified through invitations, memos, newsletters, brochures, and phone calls about the activities. Table 2 shows phone calls/conferences with parents and workshops were common at all school levels and program types. Back to School Night and End of School Awards and Recognition Ceremony were common at both school levels during the summer 2001 program.

Table 2: Types of OEY Program Parent Involvement Notification and Activities in AISD, 2000-01

School Level and Program Type	Types of OEY Parent Involvement Activities
Elementary	
Intersession	Invitations, Memos, Newsletters, Brochures Sent Home
	Phone calls
	Workshops (e.g., TAAS, parenting, child's success in school, etc.)
	Field trip, recreational activities, community event
	Parents volunteering on campus
Summer Session	Invitations, Memos, Newsletters, Brochures Sent Home
	Back to School Night, Open House, Registration, Parent Day
	End-of-School Awards & Recognition Ceremony
	Workshops (e.g., parent resources)
	Parent Conferences, phone calls
Secondary	
Summer Session	Invitations, Memos, Newsletters, Brochures Sent Home
	Back to School Night, Open House, Registration
	Parent Conferences, parent visits to school, phone calls
	Workshops (e.g., high school requirements, community speakers)
	End-of-School Awards & Recognition Ceremony

Source: OEY Staff Survey, 2001

Table 3 shows the number of parents participating in the OEY program activities by school level and program type. More parents were recorded for OEY summer program since there were more summer sites. Total numbers may have been underestimated due to incomplete records on parent participation.

Table 3: Numbers of Parents Participating in OEY-funded Activities in AISD by School Level and Program Type, 2000-01

School Level	Intersession	Summer Session	Totals
Elementary	163	2,199	2,362
Secondary (Middle and High Schools)	N A	547	547
Totals	163	2,746	2,909

Source: OEY Staff Survey, 2001

Program Completion, Student Promotion and Retention

Of the 36 schools holding OEY-funded activities in 2000-01, 8 were elementary year-round schools: Allan, Becker, Maplewood, Metz, Ortega, St. Elmo, Sanchez, and Widen. In AISD's year-round program, the school year revolves around a modified 60/20 schedule (approximately 60 days in school and 20 days out) in contrast to the traditional nine-month calendar. Elementary students in grades K-6 who were falling behind in reading or mathematics and thus were possible candidates for grade retention were provided supplementary instruction through an interdisciplinary curriculum for a 5-day period during fall and spring intersession. Of the remaining 28 campuses, 12 served as elementary cluster sites for OEY SUCCESS and other-funded programs such as the Summer Opportunity to Accelerate Reading (SOAR): Blackshear, Govalle, Graham, Joslin, Linder, Mathews, McBee, Palm, Pleasant Hill, Reilly, Sims, and Winn.

Teachers make recommendations for promotion or retention based on their students' pre- and posttest scores (where available), student's academic work, and attendance. *These are teacher recommendations only. Student promotion or retention is not necessarily predicated upon pre- and post test data, student's academic work, or attendance.* Students who attend OEY activities can be promoted to the next grade in one of four situations: 1) meeting the 90% percent program attendance and district's academic requirements; 2) meeting academic requirements only; 3) meeting attendance requirement only; or 4) meeting neither attendance nor academic requirement (*subjective student placement*).

OEY program rosters with the students demographics, pre- and posttest scores, attendance information, and recommendations for promotion or retention, were provided to the home school principals who verified the teachers' recommendations for students. The verified/edited data were analyzed to complete the TEA OEY Program Evaluation report.

Funding analyses showed that 3,518 students attended at least one day of the OEY program in 2000-2001. Of that number, 3,386 (96%) were promoted (see Table 5). Reasons for student promotion included:

- €# Most students, 78% (2,655) were promoted because the students met the district's 90% attendance requirement and the 70 or above passing grade per subject academic requirement;
- €# 13% (431) were promoted after meeting only the academic requirement;
- €# 5% (182) were promoted after meeting only the attendance requirement; and

4% (118) were promoted after meeting neither the district's attendance nor academic requirements.

The promotions meeting only the attendance requirement or meeting neither academic nor the attendance requirement signal subjective student placement rather than earned promotion to the next grade. These placements occur at the discretion of the home school principals. So, 1) 11% (101) of the third graders and 16% (125) of the fourth graders were subjectively placed in the next grade. 2) Although, the numbers of promotions are largest for grades 3-4, it is especially important to note the numbers for grade 3, because grade 3 is the grade level at which Texas public school students are required to take the state mandated test. For instance, more students (42) were retained at 3rd grade than at any other (see Column 7). Also, overall 132 students were retained, and of that figure 10% (13) of the students were retained at the request of their parents (see Columns 7 and 8).

Table 4: Promotion and Retention Statistics for All Students Served in OEY Components (Intersession and Summer School), 2000-2001

Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5	Col. 6	Col. 7	Col. 8
Grade Level	Total # of Students Promoted	# & % of Students Promoted Meeting Attendance & Academic Requirement	# & % of Students Promoted Meeting Only Academic Requirement	# & % of Students Promoted Meeting Only Attendance Requirement	# & % of Students Promoted Meeting Neither Academic Nor Attendance Requirement	Total # of Students Retained	# & % of Students Retained By Parent Request
K	34	28 (82%)	6 (18%)	0	0	0	0
1	66	59 (89%)	7 (11%)	0	0	2	0
2	129	117 (91%)	12 (9%)	0	0	3	1 (33%)
3	848	601 (71%)	146 (17%)	60 (7%)	41 (5%)	42	9 (18%)
4	746	513 (69%)	108 (14%)	76 (10%)	49 (7%)	16	3 (19%)
5	450	343 (76%)	70 (16%)	16 (4%)	21 (4%)	24	0
6	300	279 (93%)	15 (5%)	6 (2%)	0	2	0
7	387	361 (93%)	21 (5%)	3 (1%)	2 (1%)	10	0
8	426	354 (83%)	46 (11%)	21 (5%)	5 (1%)	20	0
Totals	3,386	2,655 (78%)	431 (13%)	182 (5%)	118 (4%)	119	13 (11%)

Source: TEA Optional Extended Year Program Evaluation Report, 2000-01

TEA requested data on the number of students in grades 6-8 taking courses in the summer that they had failed during the regular school year (see Table 5). Two hundred eighteen students in grades 6-8 took one course in summer school that they had failed during regular school year 2000-01, and 96% (210) passed that summer course. Ninety-eight percent (217) of 221 students in grades 6-8 who took two courses in the summer that they had failed during the regular school term passed both courses satisfactorily. Two of four students who failed three or more courses during the regular school year passed the two courses that were offered to them. Access to three courses was denied because only two instructional blocks were offered during summer school, so they were automatically short one course. Overall, course passing rates for students taking one or more courses failed during the regular school year was high.

Table 5: Course Pass/Fail Data for Students in Grades 6-8
Taking Failed Regular-Term Courses During OEY Summer 2001

Grade	# & % of Students Taking one Course Failed Regular Term		# & % of Students Taking Two Courses Failed Regular Term		# & % of Students Taking Three Courses Failed Regular Term	
	# Passed	# Failed	# Passed	# Failed	# Passed	# Failed
6	30 (100%)	0	46 (100%)	0	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
7	105 (97%)	3 (3%)	65 (100%)	0	0	0
8	75 (94%)	5 (6%)	106 (96%)	4 (4%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Total	210 (96%)	8 (4%)	217 (98%)	4 (2%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)

Source: TEA Optional Extended Year Program Evaluation Report, 2000-01

Recommendations

Although, TEA requires that the local school district provide information on students' pre- assessments to determine the program design for each student, the final promotion decision for each student rests with the home school staff. This is important because review of the data signals several positive outcomes: 1) the majority (3,086 or 91%) of at-risk students served in OEY programs 2000-01 were promoted upon completion of the program meeting the academic and attendance standard; 2) cooperation between school staff and parents occurred in many retention decisions because the total number of students (119) retained included those students retained by "parent requests" (13 or 11%). However, the 118 students promoted in spite of not meeting academic or attendance requirements raises concern. Although TEA allows for such placements, it should be discouraged by the District. AISD must begin intervention earlier in the school year using other resources and OEY funds to assist all students who are struggling academically. There were also a few operational difficulties: 1) several middle school students

enrolled in courses and attended cluster sites that they were not originally assigned by their home schools; and 2) there were some inconsistency among summer staff about rules of student attendance and class size. These difficulties were minor, and were taken care of before summer school ended.

Overall, the promotion rate for summer 2001, excluding the placements, was good. Summer school effectively serves as a safety net for students with more immediate needs to accomplish promotion through such activities as bringing reading and math skills up to grade level, and grade recovery in language arts, mathematics or other core academic classes. The very nature of the OEY program is to serve students who are in danger of "retention" or who have been retained.

However, with the arrival of the TAKS test in school year 2002-03, and the knowledge that OEY does allow for a maximum of 30 days of instruction, district administrators must look at the following students groups in order to expand the impact of OEY on student learning: third and fourth graders who were promoted meeting only the attendance requirements, or meeting neither the academic nor attendance requirements, and total number of students retained including those retained at parental requests. Most of these students could benefit from a longer instructional period of 30 days or more provided earlier in the year as opposed to just 19 days of summer school. Due to inadequate funds, school year 1998-1999 was the last time individual schools used the OEY Day or Week program (See AISD's Optional Extended Year Publication 98.15). Although there were no clear patterns indicated across grades and programs, students in OEY elementary day programs and spring intersession did have higher percentages of TAAS passing rates in grades 3-5. Therefore, the following recommendation is made to enhance OEY's contribution to AISD's instructional program:

District administrators must encourage and allow schools to use the OEY Day or Week program options (in addition to summer school) in cases where the schools can determine early (end of first semester) that their students need more instructional time and that they can provide the instructional program needed on their campuses. A day or week program can provide more immediate learning opportunities for at-risk students in need of extra academic support. More students would have multiple opportunities to pass the TAKS.

By maximizing academic and economic opportunities through the use of a 30-day instructional period, more students who need more instructional time can be served more

efficiently. By intervening with at-risk students earlier in the school year, it is likely that there would be a reduction in the number of students who need to attend summer school. This would result in a reduction in the number of sites needed to house students and a reduction in summer costs for staffing, maintenance, and transportation.

Also, there are benefits to be gained from looking at how other Texas school districts leverage their OEY funds to serve students. For example, during the February 10-13, 2002 16th Annual Texas Assessment Conference, Waco and Houston ISDs presented a preconference workshop on social promotion policies in their school districts which showed successful implementation of regular school-year programs for students in grades 1-8 that incorporated the use of OEY funds for maximum instructional days.

The second recommendation is to improve program operation and help ensure more accurate enrollment:

€# Program managers for the middle and high school summer sites should provide summer school staff a master list of every 6-8 grader assigned to attend summer school and the courses they are to take. This would help the summer site staff identify the students, the courses, and sites they have been assigned.

Summer 2001 was the first time that cluster sites were funded by OEY to operate summer school programs: SUCCESS, Middle School, and Bridges to 9th Grade. As mentioned earlier, since there were some inconsistencies in practice and policy concerning attendance, dropping students from the program, class size maximum, and use of pre- and posttest, the third recommendation can be made to improve program operation and standardize grant program implementation procedures:

€# The grants department staff annually should provide program managers and principals with a "required reading" packet on OEY policy, guidelines, and required submissions to TEA. Both the grants department staff and all managers/principals must meet and review the packet before and during any OEY planning activities. All staff involved with the OEY program must understand and follow the state grant policy and evaluation requirements in order to ensure that AISD's OEY program is in compliance with those guidelines and policy at all times.

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